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# ANTI-SLAVERY MONTHLY REPORTER.

No. 62.]

FOR JULY, 1830.

[No. 14. Vol. iii.]

I. ANTI-SLAVERY REPORTER'S PICTURE OF SLAVERY IN THE MAURITIUS, VINDICATED.

II. JAMAICA WATCHMAN.

III. SOUTHAMPTON ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

## I. PICTURE OF MAURITIUS SLAVERY VINDICATED.

SOME friends of Mr. Telfair, of the Mauritius, have widely circulated an extract from a statement of his, printed at Port Louis, purporting to be a refutation of the charges of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, No. 44, against that colony, and the whole of which statement they announce as about to be republished in this country. The only passage in the Reporter which they have now put forward as calumnious, is the following:

“The whole community have of late had their feelings violently and universally excited by a series of acts of cold, calculating, deliberate, bloody-minded ferocity, which have been judicially brought to light at Edinburgh; and no man, who has a single spark of humanity in his frame, can view them in all their dimensions of iniquity without a thrill of horror. But if, even to these appalling discoveries, we were to add the deeds of Corder and Thurtell, and of the murderers of Marr and Williamson, combining with them all the murders which, during the last twenty years, have called down the vengeance of British law on their perpetrators; we doubt whether this collective mass of crime would be found greater than the regular, business-like, daily march, for a like period, of that system, which on many estates as well-ordered as Bel Ombre, steadily proceeds, for ends equally sordid, in so torturing and murdering, inch by inch, the cultivators of their soil, as that one in ten shall be regularly slaughtered, every year, to glut the cupidity of their savage owners. Wherein do the unflinching and resolute administrators of such a system morally differ from the smooth-tongued and remorseless villain who, in Edinburgh, is now about to suffer the penalty of the law? They differ only as it appears to us in the deeper malignity, and more heartless barbarity of their conduct. And yet under all the circumstances of the case, are not their crimes *ours*? Are *we* not partakers in their guilt?” P. 377.

The circumstances which chiefly gave occasion to these severe remarks, were thus stated in the preceding pages of the same Reporter:

“By a report from Sir Robert Barclay, the collector of the internal taxes, dated November 29, 1823, it appears that the slave population of the district of Port Louis amounted, in 1822, to 7456 males and 3669 females, in all 11,125. By a return of the interments of slaves occurring in this same district, during the years 1815 to 1820 inclusive, the number of deaths amounted to 6565, being nearly at the rate of one death yearly in every ten or eleven persons, or about ten per cent. of

deaths per annum; the ordinary mortality of Europe being not more than an average, on all ages, of from two to three per cent. per annum.

"Now it has never been asserted, that there is any thing unfavourable to negro life in the *climate* of the Mauritius generally, or of the Port Louis district in particular. The contrary, indeed, may be proved by the returns of the whole free black and coloured population of the island during nearly the same period, viz. from 1816 to 1821 inclusive. The average of the population of this class for those years was 11,061. The annual average mortality during the same six years was 295, being one in 37 or 38, or about  $2\frac{2}{3}$  per cent.

"On nearly the same number of slaves, however, in the district of Port Louis, the annual rate of mortality was 1094, being little less than four times that of the free population of the colony. And supposing the same rate of mortality to extend over the whole slave population of the island, we shall have, as the result, not less than about 7000 deaths annually, or about 126,000 deaths in the 18 years we have possessed the island; a mortality nearly equal to killing off the whole of the slaves existing at any one time twice told; a number equal to which must have been supplied by means of importations, and by the consequent accumulation of the well-known atrocities from which alone such importations could be obtained." P. 375 and 376.

Now, in these returns alone, assuming them to be correct, there was enough to warrant the line of remark adopted in describing the waste of life in one whole district of the Mauritius. If, on the other hand, the returns are incorrect, then the functionaries of that island, who furnished them, must bear the blame. But even if we should reduce this frightful estimate by a third or a half, there would still remain, as was observed at the time, (p. 376,) enough to justify the strongest language then employed. The observations proceeded on the assumed accuracy of official returns, some of them prepared during the pendency of a controversy which would naturally make the persons furnishing them, and some of whom were also parties in that controversy, careful not needlessly to supply weapons against themselves. We never can suppose, if, under these circumstances, they either mistated or omitted facts, that they would do so to their own wrong.

But then it may be asked, why the above passage should have selected Bel Ombre from the mass of plantations, and introduced its name in so invidious a connection. The reason was this; that while all the other plantations in the island were lumped together, separate and specific returns of the particulars of the increase and decrease of its slaves were required and received from that estate alone.

An order was issued by the House of Commons on the 14th of April, 1826, calling for a return from the collector's and register's rolls of the number of slaves on Bel Ombre, and of the number born, dying, purchased, or sold, with various other particulars, *in each year*, from 1814, to the latest period. This return was extremely defective, and fell far short of complying with the order of the House: but still, having been made with the privity and consent of the owner of the estate, who had moreover been called upon to furnish all the explanations he might deem requisite, it might fairly be presumed to give as favourable a view of his case as could be exhibited. It was not to be believed, that

a person so conversant with business as Mr. Telfair was known to be, and living in the colony, could not have furnished all the information that was required; for even, if through his neglect, the records of the collector or of the registrar were unable to supply it, yet his own plantation books might have been referred to as containing every particular that was demanded. A transcript from them must have afforded a clear account from year to year, almost from day to day, of the total number of his slaves, and of the births, deaths, sales, and purchases occurring from time to time, during his occupancy of the estate.—If such books were kept, then it was in Mr. Telfair's power to comply with the order of the House, and in doing so, if all was regular, to satisfy the doubts which had produced the order. But instead of adopting this plain and obvious course, matters are still left in the darkness and doubt in which the irregularity of his own returns to the collector and registrar had involved them. But if it be alleged there were no such plantation books from which correct information could be drawn, then we should say that no allegation could be less creditable to the proprietor of Bel Ombre than this. It would seem at once to be a refutation of his own assertions, and those of his friends, in favour of the humane and judicious management of that plantation. It would imply an entire neglect of the very first elements of improvement on a plantation worked by slaves, if the person in charge of it had not placed himself in a capacity of knowing from year to year, and even from day to day, the state and progress of its population, and of thus giving to others a clear account of both. And even supposing that Mr. Telfair had no view to the improvement of the condition of his slaves, but merely to a profitable investment of capital, we see not how he could possibly have omitted to cause such plantation records, as have been alluded to, to be kept by his managers. Why then, when the owner of Bel Ombre learnt that an order of the House of Commons required a return of the number of slaves on that estate, and of their births, deaths, &c., *for each year* during his possession; and when he also knew, (for he was referred to on the occasion,)\* that neither the collector's rolls, nor the registry, could afford the information required, and that the only returns to be obtained from them were vague, incomplete, and unsatisfactory; why did he not offer to supply the deficiency? Was it not in his power at once to have cleared up all doubts on the subject; and was it not, therefore, obviously his duty, and also his interest, if his own records were in accordance with his present allegations, to have brought them forward? The task therefore of shewing why it was not done rests entirely on him. He alone can clear up the mystery which hangs on the subject.

Among the returns actually produced, none were found that furnished any intelligent data from which to reason, excepting for two of the twelve years for which they were required, namely 1819 and 1825.

The remarks made at the time, by the Reporter, on these returns, and which seem to be fair and reasonable deductions from them, were as follows:

“A farther proof of the dreadful extent of the mortality prevailing among the slaves in this colony, may be drawn from the case of the

\* See Parliamentary papers of 1827, No. 285, p. 41.

estate of Bel Ombre, belonging to Mr. Telfair, the private Secretary of Sir Robert Farquhar, and the humane treatment of the slaves on which estate Sir Robert, who was himself a constant visitor upon it, highly extolled in the House of Commons, representing it as a pattern for good management, and one of the best regulated in the island. Now, even on this well regulated estate, the *decrease* appears, from authentic documents, to have amounted annually to about 12 per cent. The return for 1819 gives 64 deaths and 12 births on a population of 378, being an actual decrease of 52, or  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and the return of 1825 gives 55 deaths and 16 births on a population of 372, being an actual decrease of 39, or  $10\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; or, on an average of the two periods, a decrease of 12 per cent. The *mortality* in the first year was as high as 17 per cent., and in the second as high as 15 per cent., being an average of 16 per cent.," p. 376.

Mr. Telfair now alleges that this view of the subject was erroneous; as the returns which the Reporter assumed to be annual, and on which it reasoned as such, were, in fact, not annual, but triennial, and that therefore the mortality of  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., for example, was the mortality, not of one year, but of three, being at the rate, therefore, not of  $13\frac{1}{2}$ , but of  $4\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. per annum. We shall recur to this point hereafter. In the mean time we will assume, what we are not at all inclined to believe, that he is right, and that we have laboured under a mistake in regarding the return of births and deaths as annual, and not triennial. And what in reality does he gain by this concession? The object was to prove the destructive nature of the slavery prevailing in Mauritius; and though it cannot be denied that  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is a more appalling ratio of decrease than  $4\frac{1}{3}$ ; yet is not the latter a sufficiently cogent proof of the deathful tendency of that system, especially when found recurring, year after year, on a plantation which by Sir Robert Farquhar, and other friends of Mr. Telfair, was represented as a model of humane management, and of wise and beneficent attention to the comfort and well-being of the slaves? We may judge from this fact of the standard of humanity among the slave-holders of Mauritius. The steady progression of mortality at such a rate, in a climate congenial to the slave, sufficiently establishes the malignity and destructiveness of the system. It cannot consist with moderate labour and an abundance of food. It can only be satisfactorily accounted for by severity of treatment;—by the excessive exaction of the slave's coerced labour, or by the scantiness and inadequacy of his nourishment.

This will be illustrated by comparing the decrease among the slaves of Bel Ombre, even at the assumed lower rate of  $4\frac{1}{3}$  per cent., with the ascertained progress of population among the free black and coloured classes in the Mauritius. On referring to the parliamentary papers for 1823, No. 89, p. 127, we find the following census of these classes for the years 1817, 1818, and 1819.

|          | Population. | Births. | Deaths. | Increase. |
|----------|-------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 1817 . . | 10,209      | 504     | 262     | 242       |
| 1818 . . | 10,549      | 536     | 336     | 200       |
| 1819 . . | 11,552      | 576     | 337     | 239       |

This return, it will be perceived, gives a regular increase of upwards of two per cent. per annum, in the very years when the slaves of Bel

Ombre, even on Mr. Telfair's own admission, were decreasing at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and in the district of Port Louis generally at a much higher rate.

It has been argued, however, that the decrease of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is to be explained, first by the fact of an epidemic, and next by the disparity of the sexes. Let us consider these separately.

With respect to the epidemic, it is obvious that its influence would apply equally to the free negroes as to the slave negroes, except in so far as the slave system, notwithstanding its alleged humanity and its boasted hospitals, is of itself unfriendly to health and life. This inherent unfriendliness, however, is the very point contended for, and which, by the comparison just instituted, is irrefragably proved.

As to the disparity of the sexes, we have to remark, that when Mr. Telfair first purchased Bel Ombre, in 1816, the sexes appear to have been nearly equal, the males amounting to 133, and the females to 120, making a difference of only about one-tenth. Now, giving full credit to Mr. Telfair for those humane, enlightened, and philanthropic sentiments which he professes, and which his friends attribute to him, it might have been expected that he would have been anxious to diminish, and most certainly not to aggravate, this slight disparity. But what is the fact? We have in the very next line an enumeration of his slaves in 1819, (p. 5,) including those transferred to him in 1816, and those whom he had subsequently added by purchase or otherwise, and it makes the males 250, and the females 176. Another enumeration, bearing the same date, at p. 34, makes the males 291, and the females 109: raising the original disparity of one-tenth to about a third; that is to say, more than threefold what it was when the estate came into Mr. Telfair's hands.

Now these additions must have been the voluntary and deliberate act of Mr. Telfair; and yet, if we had judged by Mr. Telfair's own professions, and by the testimonies of his friends in proof of his studious and wakeful attention, not only to the physical comforts, but to the moral improvement of his slaves; the very last thing we should have expected, or even thought possible, would have been, that in the course of one, two, or three years, he should voluntarily have so increased the disparity of the sexes on his estate, that there should only be about two women for every three men upon it. Such a proceeding *voluntarily* adopted appears to be altogether incompatible with any rational and settled purpose of promoting the real comfort and well-being of the slaves; nor can any strength of assertion, or any multiplicity of testimonies to character, rebut the plain inference deducible from such a fact. For whatever effect this enormously increased disparity may have had in swelling the mortality, or in aggravating the moral evils prevailing in Bel Ombre, it was his own proper and spontaneous act, done in the certain and inevitable prospect of the numerous evils, both physical and moral, which he must have known could not fail to flow from it.

During a part at least of the years 1818 and 1819, there were on Bel Ombre, (see papers of 1827, No. 285, p. 34,) 199 females; and the births in that year are stated to be 12. Now it was this circumstance, among others, which led to the conclusion that the return of

births and deaths there given was for a single year, and not, as Mr. Telfair now affirms, for three years. We could not have supposed it possible, for one moment, that the births among so many females had only been 12 in three years, or only four annually; and yet such must be the fact, if the affirmation of Mr. Telfair be correct, that the return of births and deaths was a triennial and not an annual return. If it were so, then must there of necessity be something radically vicious in a system which among so many females limited the births to only four in one year. Nor can we conceive it possible that this should have been the fact, without such undue severity in the exaction of labour, or such a deficiency in the supply of food, as tended to check and almost to destroy the natural fecundity of the human race.

But another circumstance, which led to the conclusion that the return for 1819 was an annual, and not a triennial return, was this, that at the close of a nominal list of the slaves on Bel Ombre, dated the 25th February, 1819, and signed by Mr. Blancard, the co-partner and manager of the estate, the last twelve names in the list are said to be *new born*, (paper of 1827, No. 235, p. 25,) that is, we presume, born within the preceding year; a number which exactly agrees with the number of births given in the same paper, p. 34, for 1819, namely, 12.—And if we had thus fair grounds for concluding that the births were the births of *one* year, and not of three years, we were necessarily led to the conclusion that the deaths embraced the same period, and that the return of births and deaths was therefore an annual and not a triennial return. Mr. Telfair, however, now affirms the contrary; but whether he be right or wrong on this point, is in truth of no real importance; for to prove the monstrously unnatural state of things which is produced by slavery in the Mauritius, it seems quite sufficient to take the fact on Mr. Telfair's shewing, that in three years only 12 children were born in Bel Ombre, being four annually. To establish this more clearly, we will recur to the paper of 1823, No. 89, p. 127. The number of free black and coloured females in the island in 1819, was 6,349. The number of their births in that year is stated to have been 576, being one birth for each eleven females; whereas on Bel Ombre the births were one for every 44 females, if we take their number to be 176, as it stands at p. 5 of the papers of 1827, No. 285; or one for every 50 females, if we take their number at 199, as it stands at p. 34 of the same paper.

And here we are reminded of another circumstance, which of itself would be sufficient to confirm us in the opinion that we were right as to the precise periods for which these returns are given, and that is, their irregular, confused, and even contradictory tenor. The order of the House of Commons was clear and precise. It called for the number of slaves on Bel Ombre *in each year*, from 1814 to the latest period to which the account could be made up; and, also, for "the number of slaves born, dying, purchased, or sold" *in each year*, as these stood both in the registry, and in the collector's rolls.

The returns to this order, as they appear in the papers of 1827, No. 285, are as follows:

From the registry;—in 1815, 253 slaves; in 1819, 426; and in 1825, 387; (p. 4 & 5.)—Again, (p. 34.) in 1819, 490 slaves. No specification is given for any other years. Both these returns, though differing so

much from each other, are signed by the same individual, E. A. Draper, Acting Register, and bear the same date 31 Aug. 1826.

From the collector's rolls we have a different statement, viz. in 1814, 220 slaves; in 1819, 378 slaves; in 1820, and 1821, 426 slaves; in 1822, 419 slaves; in 1823, 360 slaves; in 1824, 388 slaves; in 1825, 372 slaves; and in 1826, 173 slaves (p. 35—40).

Besides this, we have a list containing the names of all the slaves "*existing*" on Bel Ombre, signed by Mr. Blancard, and dated 25 Feb. 1819, and making the whole number 490, of which 64 are marked as dead, thus reducing the number to 426 (p. 6—25). We have also a list of slaves "*existing*" on Bel Ombre, dated 25 Jan. 1822, and signed by Charles Telfair, containing only 197 names, but closing with a certificate, that the number on the estate, at that time, was 425 (p. 46—53). We have, moreover, a third list of the same kind, dated 27 Feb. 1825, and signed for Mr. Telfair, by William Foster, containing 196 names, and certifying the whole number to be 318 (p. 26—33). Some curious inferences from a comparison of the numbers and names in these lists we must for the present omit.

Surely this uncertainty and confusion might have been obviated; and means might have been taken, by a reference to the plantation books, to explain these otherwise inexplicable discrepancies. Mr. Telfair doubtless could have given a satisfactory solution of them. He must have been aware that such a solution was essential to the purpose for which the returns had been called for; and yet it was not given. Who then is to blame for any suspicions which, under all the circumstances of the case, were naturally caused by so much obscurity, but the individual in whose power it was to have made the whole matter clear?

But this is not all. As a public functionary, and the secretary of the governor, he must have been aware that the measure of registration was one which the Government and the Parliament had it at heart to enforce, as the only effectual means of detecting, and thus preventing the illicit importation of slaves. Mr. Telfair himself now admits that a system of strict and vigilant registration is an effectual bar to slave trading; and he pleads the recent institution of such a registry (at the close of 1826) as a proof that no slave trade can now exist. But, if so, how are we to account for it, that during the twelve years which had elapsed previous to 1827, and during which a registry was as much a part of the law as it now is, that registry should have been permitted to fall into complete neglect and consequent confusion, without having excited the jealousy and vigilance, or the remonstrances of the local Government of which he formed a part? And how did it happen that he himself, bound by all his obligations as a servant of the crown, to see that that law was enforced, should not only have neglected to do so, or to take, or even to propose any effectual measures to that end; but that he himself should have been amongst the defaulters? And could it be otherwise than that his influential example should have given encouragement to similar defaults in others? They would naturally feel secure in the violation of an enactment, however vitally important it might be represented by His Majesty's Secretary of State to be, which was sanctioned by the example of one who was the confidential friend and adviser of the governor, and whose conduct,

under all the circumstances of the case, could not fail to produce the impression that it might be set at nought with impunity. But we will not pursue this subject farther at present, although much remains to be said upon it. Our readers will feel that a single successful slave-voyage, encouraged even by the neglect or omission in a public functionary of the only effectual means of preventing it, involved more horrors than have ever been alleged to flow from slavery on any one plantation in the island.

Having thus considered the inferences fairly deducible from those returns which profess to exhibit the state and progress of population in the Mauritius generally, as well as on a particular plantation; inferences which cannot be shaken by any multiplication of individual affirmations to the contrary;—we would say one word in justification of the sketch that was given of the *general* state of slavery in the Mauritius, in the Reporters Nos. 42 and 44.

*1st. As to the want of education and religious instruction.*

Even one of Mr. Telfair's own compurgators, Mr. R. M. Thomas, the protector of slaves, in a letter of 19 June 1829, lets us into this secret, that, down to that time, now only twelve months ago, on no estate but Bel Ombre had any, even the slightest, attempt been made to instruct the slaves. The words of this witness are—"Mr. Telfair is the *only* individual in the colony, lay or clerical, who *permits* elementary instruction to be imparted to his slaves." Did the Reporter then affirm untruly, that "the slaves of the Mauritius were generally excluded from all moral or religious instruction?" P. 380.

*2. As to the general condition of the slaves.*

The LAW of the island, previous to 1827, made no distinction whatever in the punishments inflicted on men and women, adults or children. The following are a few of its provisions—Slaves can possess nothing, can gain nothing, by their own industry or the liberality of others, that shall not belong in full property to their masters, without the power, on the part of their children or other relations, to claim any portion thereof from any disposition whatever they may make.—A slave striking his master or mistress, or their children, and causing a wound, shall suffer death; and if he commit violence upon a free person he shall be severely punished, even with death, as the case may be.—A fugitive slave (Maron) absent *a month*, after being denounced, shall have his ears cut off, and be branded with a fleur de lis; if absent, a second time, for the same space, his ham-strings shall be cut, and he shall again be branded; if a third time, he shall suffer death.—The slaves, *when deemed deserving of it, may be put in chains and flogged* by their masters; but all persons are forbidden to torture or mutilate slaves on pain of confiscation, and of being proceeded against criminally.—(Papers of 1828, No. 526, p. 5—19.)

The mitigations of this terrible code are—that masters are ordered to furnish to each slave the scanty allowance of two pounds of Indian corn, or an equivalent in other food, every day, together with the yearly clothing necessary—and "are forbidden to inflict more than thirty lashes" at a time---and are also "forbidden to make their slaves work on Sunday."---"Slaves not fed and clothed, or barbarously and inhu-

manly treated, may complain to the solicitor general, by whom the masters shall be prosecuted." (ibid.)

Such is the *law*,---now for the *practice*. In the beginning of 1827, Sir Lowry Cole deemed it necessary to republish from the slave code of the island, framed in 1723, and renewed in 1767, the clauses which refer to the four mitigating provisions we have mentioned, namely, those respecting Sunday labour; food and clothing; the limitation of punishments; and the Solicitor-General's power of prosecution in certain cases. This republication he accompanied by a circular letter, addressed to the Magistrates throughout the island, in which he states, that notwithstanding these laws "which forbid masters on pain of arbitrary punishment and confiscation to make their slaves work on Sundays," the Governor had learned that, "on *many* estates the slaves work on Sundays as on other week days." This conduct, he adds, "so repugnant to humanity, can no longer be tolerated;" and he "is resolved to put an end to so crying an abuse." He admits, indeed, that "the planters may find it necessary to work their sugar-houses at night;" and he does "not pretend to oppose it;" but, in that case, he gives it as his opinion, that the slaves "*ought* to have the following day to rest themselves;" and when circumstances oblige the planters to deprive their slaves of Sundays, he hopes "they will feel the justice of indemnifying them." He recommends also, that they should not be required to work until half an hour before sun-rise and after sun-set. What must their hours have been before to make such a limitation as this seem to Sir L. Cole a merciful indulgence? (ibid. p. 30.)

He then adverts to the food, clothing, and correction, which masters are allowed to deal out to their slaves, and says, that "there exist in this respect abuses which it is the duty of the magistrates to remove by denouncing them to the Solicitor-General." And if this warning should be neglected, he tells them, that he "will find himself compelled much against his will to recur to measures of rigour which will be repugnant to his feelings, but which will be called for by the dictates of humanity, by the laws, and by the colonial interests." He adverts also in strong terms, to the excess of punishment inflicted by some masters beyond the thirty lashes allowed by law. (ibid. p. 30—32.)

Upon all these points we have the opinions and recommendations, the wishes and the hopes of Sir Lowry Cole, but no effective enactments. He issued, however, about the same time, an ordinance to regulate the weight of the chains and fetters which masters were authorized, by the existing laws, to fasten on their slaves, at their own discretion. The weight in future, he ordained to be; for two men chained together, nine pounds;—for one man six pounds;—for two women five pounds;—for one woman, or for a child three pounds. These weights, however, might be augmented without limit by the magistrate. Women and children, though they might be chained, were not at the same time to be fettered; but men might be both chained and fettered by a magistrate's order. Collars, with their branches, were now for the first time forbidden by this ordinance. (ibid. p. 27.)

This barbarous law, though it doubtless appeared to Sir L. Cole to be a merciful relaxation of the preceding law, which fixed no limit to the

weight of chains and fetters, and allowed of the three-pronged collars, formerly described by us, (No. 44, p. 379); and though regarded in the Mauritius (such was the state of public feeling there,) as an undue interference with the authority of the master, is thus spoken of by Sir George Murray, in a letter of the 8th May, 1829, addressed to the Governor of the Mauritius. (See papers of 1829, No. 333). "It is not without much surprise and concern," says the benevolent Secretary, "that his Majesty's Government have observed the provisions of this ordinance. The use of chains, as an ordinary instrument of domestic punishment in a tropical climate, must be deprecated on every principle of humanity and sound policy." "This enactment not merely tolerates them, but subjects even women and children of the most tender years to the same description of punishments. It even permits the use of what are termed branches, attached to the collars, borne on the necks of the sufferer. It assigns no limit to the duration of this species of punishment, and, when sanctioned by the magistrate, no limit to the weight of the chain. Unfortunately, it cannot be suggested, that these instruments which owners are permitted to employ, are formidable only in name. Specimens of the various chains and collars, with or without spokes, which are used at Mauritius in the punishment of slaves," have been transmitted to this department; "and they appear to be nothing less than instruments of torture."—Again, he observes, that it had been stated to him, that in the very streets of Port Louis, "the slaves employed as scavengers were yoked together in carts, and exhibited a most offensive and humiliating spectacle." (Papers of 1829, No. 333.)

### 3. As to the *flogging and chaining of females.*

An attempt has been made to throw doubt on the existence of this practice. And yet does the language of the preceding statements permit any doubt to rest upon that point? If it did, it would be obviated by the following passage, in the circular of Sir Lowry Cole, already alluded to. "I think it," he says, "necessary to dwell upon the various punishments inflicted upon negro women. *Up to this moment there has not existed any difference in the corrections ordered by the masters*, in respect to them, and those in use with regard to the men. Rest assured, that his Majesty's Government will suppress the punishment of flogging for negro women." And lest we should be left to suppose that Sir Lowry Cole was some fanatical Anti-Slavery partizan, he goes on to use the following words. "It must, in fact, be admitted, that the weakness of their sex, and public decency, *would seem* to require that negro women should undergo the lash only in extraordinary cases, and with the concurrence of the local authority. Do not irons, the stocks, imprisonment," (is this intended as irony?) "offer sufficient means of punishing negro women, whose condition, besides being almost always precarious, requires great care?" Here we have the proof that the testimony of Sir Lowry Cole did not arise from any squeamishness he may have felt on the subject of slavery itself; and that he acted from no bias towards the views of the Anti-Slavery party. Indeed, Sir Lowry Cole, in a subsequent despatch, relents a little from the severity of his circular, and pleads, with the Secretary of State, to indulge the good people of the Mauritius with a *prolongation*

of this amiable practice.—“I admit,” he says, “that the abolishing of corporal punishment in the case of female slaves is highly *desirable*,” yet, “I conceive, that bad consequences might result from its *immediate* prohibition.” Can any one read these words of this public functionary without suspecting the horrid extent to which this practice must have been carried, and admitting the hardening effect of familiarity with this and the other incidents of slavery? (Papers of 1828, No. 526, p. 32.)

Now let any man compare these authentic and official statements of Sir George Murray and Sir Lowry Cole with the view given of the general treatment of slaves in the Reporter (No. 44, pp. 377—380,) and say wherein that work has been guilty of exaggeration. Wherever it has touched on the same topics, it is completely borne out by these high authorities; and it may, therefore, have credit for having at least aimed at accuracy in every other part of its delineation. We believe it to be correct, and should not be shaken from that belief, though every slaveholder in the Mauritius were to unite with every guest who may have shared his hospitalities, in saying, or even swearing to the contrary. And, even if Sir George Murray and Sir Lowry Cole had not verified the Reporter’s most revolting statements, the state of the law, previous to the recent Order in Council, would be quite conclusive as marking the utter wretchedness and degradation of the slave.

But although the accuracy of the picture drawn in the Reporter of the general treatment of the slaves has thus been proved; yet it may be said that the particular details of cruelty that were there given as occurring on Bel Ombre were false and calumnious. Was it then a calumny to say, with respect to a Mauritius plantation, that slaves, both men and women, were there both flogged and chained? or was Bel Ombre the only estate in the island that was exempted from such inflictions? The facts stated to have occurred there, Mr. Telfair has chosen to consider as a personal charge, imputing to him the perpetration of cruel acts. It does not follow, however, that because they occurred on Bel Ombre, they were either authorized by him, or even known to him, though in such a case even ignorance is culpable. It may be unfortunate for a man to be connected with an estate of which such things have been said; but while a manager possesses, as he does in the Mauritius, so unlimited a power of arbitrary punishment, Mr. Telfair is implicated in any particular act of severity occurring at Bel Ombre in his absence, only as the Earl of Romney was implicated in the act of Mr. Cardin, his manager in St. Kitts, who confined his Lordship’s old female mulatto slave, Betto Douglas, in the stocks of his Lordship’s estate, for six whole months, because she had failed to pay her monthly hire. (See Reporters, No. 25, and No. 28.)---It is not imputed to Mr. Telfair that he either inflicted the particular punishments which are stated to have taken place there, or that he even knew of them. The sound of the whip could not have reached him at Port Louis, where his official duties lay. Indeed his inability to furnish a correct view of that branch of plantation economy, the state and progress of the slave population on his estate, does not indicate any very regular habits of inspection and scrutiny into the circumstances of the slaves.---Besides, let us consider the state of the *law* in the Mauritius. It empowered his manager to inflict the lash, and chains, and

fetters, on all slaves, and to inflict besides on fugitive slaves (*Marons*) the punishment of branding, of hamstringing, and even of death. Merely to flog them therefore, and even to flog them severely, might seem rather a lenient and merciful remission, according to the standard of retributive justice for slaves in the Mauritius;—and that the sex of the fugitives would be no protection from such flogging, and chaining, and fettering we have already seen. That such things too may be done, and have been done with impunity, in *all* our slave colonies there is abundant evidence. In the Mauritius, especially, the proof of the frequent occurrence of such transactions is established not only by the official statements quoted above of Sir Lowry Cole and Sir George Murray, but by the various abortive complaints of slaves, referred to in No. 44, p. 383—390; and may further be proved by abundant oral testimony ready to be produced, if such testimony were necessary to prove that severe floggings and chainings, both of men and women, were common, on plantations throughout the Mauritius, not excepting Bel Ombre.

Mr. Telfair and his friends have assumed that these statements must be false, because, as they allege, they rest solely on the evidence of two men, Higginson and Kendrick, whose evidence on some other occasion, as they say, has been proved to be unworthy of credit. It is an entire mistake, however, to suppose that the Reporter is compromised by this circumstance; or that it has relied on the testimony of either of these individuals. The witnesses of the facts are entirely different persons whose veracity we have not yet heard questioned, and who, whenever an inquiry takes place, will answer for themselves. In the mean time we repeat, that the particular acts of atrocity in question were related with no intention of inculpating any individual, but merely to illustrate the general system, and to shew that so inveterate an evil is negro slavery, that even on an estate, described by Sir R. Farquhar as well regulated, and the owner of which held a respectable situation in colonial society, and had credit there both for humanity and for more than usual liberality, horrors may occur in the administration of the system, which make the blood of all, unused to such scenes, to run cold. This we are ready in the face of the asseverations of all the slave holders in the world, and of all their occasional guests, and boon companions, to affirm and maintain, aye, and to prove to be the uniform, necessary, and inevitable effect of that wicked system called negro slavery, wherever it is suffered to exist.

Can we have forgotten, that from 1787 to 1807, we had hosts of generals and admirals, and captains, and public functionaries of all grades, and planters, and merchants, testifying far more strongly in favour of the loveliness even of the slave trade as well as of West India slavery, than they now do in favour of the slavery of the Mauritius; their testimony being backed also by the governors, and councils, and assemblies of slave colonies. And yet these accumulated masses of pretended evidence were then felt by the abolitionists, and are now acknowledged by the world at large, to have been utterly false;—the mere effusion either of ignorance, or prejudice; or pride, or cupidity, or the rancour of party spirit, or the mere effect of familiarity with the horrors which were denied or extenuated. Can we have forgotten the scenes of Do-

minica, Nevis, and the Bahamas, and the testimonies borne to the high respectability and humanity of a Huggins or a Moss? Can we have forgotten the mock conspiracies of Jamaica in 1824, with all their horrid and sanguinary results; or the palpable and multiplied perjuries which drove Lecesne and Escoffery into exile, and nearly succeeded in crushing them; or the audacious but flimsy fabrications by which, only two years since, an attempt was made to justify the persecuting laws of the Assembly against sectarian missionaries, but which their agents in this country have not dared to publish? Or can we have forgotten the court martial which tried and condemned the missionary Smith? But, above all, can we have already forgotten the fact of the united testimony of the whole white population of the Mauritius, with their deluded governors at their head, affirming the non-existence of that slave trade, the proof of the extensive prevalence of which, for many years, is now so unquestionable as to be fully and publicly admitted by his Majesty's government.

But on this point we have a recent and most instructive and most apposite elucidation in the Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry, sent to the Mauritius, in 1827, which has lately been published, (Papers of 1829, No. 292.) Referring to that most striking document, we will content ourselves now with transcribing the substance of some remarks which were made upon it on its first appearance, in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, No. 51, p. 39—41.

“We have often been thought to deal unfairly by the owners of Slaves in our colonies, when we have refused to admit their testimony in favour of their own system, (although such testimony amounts to no more at best than the substitution of the plea of Not Guilty in the place of legal evidence;) or when we have ventured, as in our last number (p. 26,) and on many former occasions, to warn our readers against the effects of that sympathy of interest and that fellow feeling among them which tend to produce a general and firm combination of all the members of the dominant class, not only in defending, *per fas aut nefas*, the worst abuses of their system, but in oppressing and persecuting every individual of their body who may dare to assist in exposing its incurable wickedness. But have we really merited the charge of unfairness on this account? We think not. In addition to the innumerable proofs which have been exhibited of such combinations from the year 1787 to the present day, we have it now in our power to corroborate what have been deemed our harsh and groundless imputations, by the testimony of his Majesty's Commissioners, whose report is now before us. ‘Although the investigation of such a subject as the Slave trade,’ these gentlemen observe, ‘would at any time have been unpopular with the inhabitants (of the Mauritius,) it was apparent to us on our arrival that circumstances had caused a strong repugnance to prevail against it.’ ‘As it might be supposed that many individuals were deeply interested in evading the retrospect into their former proceedings, they would take advantage of their influence and of the situation of the community, to awaken a general apprehension of the consequences of such an investigation as that with which we were charged, and of the risk attending any admission of the extent to which the Slave trade had

been carried on and encouraged.' And it has even appeared to the Commissioners 'that the community had tacitly, if not expressly,' 'entered into a general resolution to make no admission that the Slave trade had been encouraged by the inhabitants, or carried on to any extent in the colony.' They therefore have felt themselves bound to state, 'that the difficulties of the inquiry, from the general unpopularity attending it have been considerable;' nor have they 'deemed it proper *at this stage of the inquiry*, and in the *present temper* of the community, to disclose to parties the names of their accusers,' because as there is a 'prevalent impression of the hostility of the community against persons making accusations of Slave trading,' and examples of 'prosecutions sustained' by those persons; such disclosures would have been construed into an intention, on the part of the Commissioners, 'to discourage persons from coming forward' to give evidence on the subject. In the mean time the witnesses were made to subscribe their statements, and were warned that they should be held responsible for them, and would be liable to be called on to confirm them judicially.—The Commissioners farther intimate that they had every reason given to them to apprehend that 'the extensive powers of the police department had been unjustly exercised to the prejudice' of persons who had given information respecting the Slave trade, and had thereby incurred the hostility of the community; and they express their solicitude, particularly in the case of one individual who had made a frank confession of his own delinquencies, that 'in giving publicity to his information, care may be taken that *he* shall not be made to suffer from the consequences of the voluntary avowal of his past conduct.' The danger, however, appears to them to be still more imminent in the case of slaves or of liberated captives who may be instrumental in making known infractions of the abolition law;—and it is manifest both from their report, and from a variety of past occurrences, (see the case of Pedro, Reporter, vol. ii. p. 384, and that of Troptard, 14th Report of the African Institution, p. 23,) that nothing but the most energetic and determined interference of the government can save such persons, so informing, from the effects of a cruel and remorseless vengeance. Now what does all this indicate but a community made up of confederates in evil; hardened, by the kindred employments of Slave trading and Slave driving, and by mutual countenance and support, to deliberate combinations for lawless purposes? And such confederacies belong not to the Mauritius alone; they belong essentially and inherently to every community on which Slavery exercises the same withering and demoralizing influence."

The spirit and principles of these remarks apply with equal force, *mutatis mutandis*, to slavery as to the slave trade. The parties in both cases, in the Mauritius at least, are the same.

The friends of Mr. Telfair are desirous of bringing forward the London Missionary Society, and some of its missionaries, among the compurgators of that gentleman, and, through him, of the Mauritius system. In this view, it is somewhat remarkable that, at the Anti-Slavery Meeting, which took place at Freemason's Hall, on the 15th of May last, Mr. George Bennet, a highly respectable gentleman, employed by that So-

ciety to visit their various missions in the southern and eastern seas, and also in India, addressed the meeting on this subject. He had seen slavery, in all its aspects, and he declared that "*in the Mauritius it wore its most horrid and disgusting form*;" but, he added, that, "whether in its mild or more appalling exhibitions, it had, really and essentially, a cruelly demoralizing effect, not only on the poor slaves, but on all who were the owners of slaves, on all who even employed slaves in their families, from governors downwards through all grades, civil and military.—Wherever it existed, *there* the moral sense ever became blunted, and it was impossible to estimate the extensiveness of its influence." See Reporter, No. 61, p. 252. This is the simple solution of all those imposing compurgations on which slave-holders in the East as well as in the West, are apt to place so vain a reliance.

We here suspend any farther observations until the promised work of Mr. Telfair shall have been published, and we are thereby enabled to examine it more deliberately. As yet we have only had an opportunity of seeing it for a few hours, and we do not even possess a copy of it. In the mean time, what has now been said on the state and progress of population among the slaves, in the Mauritius generally, and on Bel Ombre in particular; and on the condition of slavery as it existed in that colony both in law and in practice; will be sufficient to obviate any injurious inferences, with respect to the accuracy of former statements, to which the circular notice of Mr. Telfair's friends may have possibly led in the case of persons uninformed on the subject.

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## II. JAMAICA WATCHMAN.

IN the supplement to our last number, we inserted some extracts from a work of the Rev. Dr. Walsh, on the Brazils, confirming, in a very striking manner, all our views of the cruelly debasing effects of negro slavery, and of the unspeakable benefits to be produced by an emancipation from its bonds. The Jamaica Watchman, in a late number (April 14, 1830), admits some remarkable communications on the general subject of this debasement, as it affects not only the slave, but the free. A correspondent, in speaking of the degraded concubinage so generally prevalent between the whites and the free coloured women, observes, that

"The people of colour owe to Mr. Morgan, and to the *Dissenting* ministers generally, no little gratitude for the check which they have succeeded in putting to this detestable system, and so far from any of their body being displeased with him, they are rather disposed to wish him God speed in his work of charity, and labour of love. From the vicious, the demoralized, and depraved portion of the community, the Dissenters must expect abuse and vituperation. From the sober, reasonable, and more respectable, they will receive treatment exactly the reverse; and whilst they persevere in their endeavours to put an end to this evil in particular, they will carry with them the best wishes and prayers of such for their speedy success.

"No man, Mr. Editor, who has any regard for the honour of his caste, can do otherwise than wish an end put to the system.—No man who has reflected upon the evils it has produced, can do otherwise than reprobate it. To this system *principally* the people of colour owe their degradation. The people of colour never will be respected so long as the whites are permitted to take their mistresses

from among them; and so long as that is the case they cannot but be despised."

Again:—

"To talk of the happiness of the free coloured man is absurd; of the happiness of the *slave madness!* As well might the sand merchants or itinerant hucksters, who drive their long-eared slaves through the streets of London, vaunt the happiness of their overladen, overdriven asses, because, for the interest of his owner, each is stabled and gets a meal of the cheapest and worst food, in order to prepare him for another day of suffering, and unremunerated labour.

"It is in vain that the glaring falsehood is reiterated over and over again by the interested press here, and the hired press in Europe.—It is in vain that distinguished strangers are taken to particular estates, after due preparation of the negroes. It is in vain, that under the denomination of Saints, men who are ornaments to their country and their species, are calumniated and abused, and the ministers of religion vilified and insulted—all, all, is useless 'vexation of spirit.' The people of England meet the falsehood with contempt, and few, very few, are there of those 'perishing Englishmen,' who would not impart a 'taste of their knuckles' to any spurious West Indian, who might be fool-hardy enough to suggest to them a change of their 'freedom and starvation' for the 'labour and plenty' of the slave."

### III. SOUTHAMPTON ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

THE following important resolutions were unanimously adopted at a recent meeting of the Southampton Anti-Slavery Society, viz.

1. That viewing slavery, as it exists in the British colonies, in the light of a great national crime, highly offensive in the sight of God, disgraceful to us as a free and a Christian people, and cruel and unjust towards those who are the hapless victims of it, we are determined to employ every means in our power, that the constitution has given us, to put an end to this great and aggravated evil.

2. That considering the approaching general election, as an occasion eminently fitting for the nation at large to vindicate its moral character, and publicly to testify its repudiation of this flagrant system of tyranny and injustice, we resolve, and invite our fellow-townsmen, and more especially those who signed the late petitions against slavery, to unite with us herein—in bestowing our suffrages, to give the preference to such candidates, as besides other claims to our support shall add this—of being the firm, zealous, and decided friends of the cause of abolition, and shall pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours in Parliament to accomplish, at the earliest possible period, the extinction of slavery,—urging it upon the Legislature to begin, as its first step in this great moral work, with fixing a day, on and after which all children, the offspring of slaves, shall be born free throughout his Majesty's dominions.

3. That the Committee prepare and circulate forthwith an address in conformity with the preceding resolutions.

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*This, and all other publications of the Society, may be had at their office 18, Aldermanbury; or at Messrs. Hatchard's, 187, Piccadilly, and Arch's, Cornhill. They may also be procured, through any bookseller, or at the depots of the Anti-Slavery Society throughout the kingdom.*

## OFFICE OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

18, ALDERMANBURY, LONDON.

June 24, 1830.

THE very gratifying result of the late Public Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, (a full account of which will be found in the Monthly Reporter, No. 61, with a copy of the Petition in the Supplement to that Number,) has encouraged the Committee to hope that they shall be zealously and promptly supported by every friend to their cause in their increased endeavours to promote the objects of the Society; and in order that nothing may be wanting on their part, they take this opportunity of drawing your attention to their present views and immediate objects.

The important measures which almost entirely engrossed the attention of the last two sessions of Parliament, together with the reasonable expectation that something would be effectually done to carry into execution the Resolutions of 1823, restrained them from pressing the subject so earnestly in Parliament as they desired; and repeated assurances that such a code of laws would be promulgated by Orders in Council, for the government of the Crown Colonies, as should as far as possible alleviate the system of Slavery, and lay the foundation for its certain abolition at some period,—and up to the full standard of which code the enactments of the Colonies having Legislatures of their own, would be expected to come,—induced the Committee to postpone any general appeal to the country until the result of the proposed measures should be known.

These Orders in Council were promulgated early in February last: and how entirely the hopes of the Committee were disappointed by them, will be seen by reference to the Orders themselves, or to the digest of them contained in the 58th number of the Monthly Reporter. Without further discussing them at present, it is obvious that from this period the path of the Committee was plain,—to appeal to the public; to call upon the country, and especially upon all who have respect to the principles of justice and the requirements of our common Christianity, with one simultaneous effort, and in firm but respectful language, to ask of the British Parliament to terminate for ever the revolting system of colonial bondage, and perseveringly to repeat the effort, until complete redress be obtained, and no British subject be, or bear the title of, A SLAVE.

The present session of Parliament is already too far advanced to allow of more than a partial expression of the voice of the country upon this important subject, before its termination; but abundant opportunity will be afforded at an early period of the next. To that point the Committee are anxious that your attention should be directed, and your efforts particularly concentrated; and especially that the previous interval may be employed in spreading information, putting all Auxiliary Societies into an effective state, and forming new ones as extensively as possible, in order that the whole kingdom may be organized and prepared to express, by Petitions to both Houses of Parliament, a strong sense of the universal abhorrence with which Slavery is regarded by the people of Great Britain, excepting only those who are interested in its continuance.

In laying down the plan of proceeding, it will of course be proper to take into consideration the peculiar circumstances of each place; yet as a general rule, the Committee are far from wishing Petitions to be confined to counties and large towns; but, excepting perhaps in a few

places where they can be obtained from extraordinary numbers, they should be extended to parishes, villages, hamlets, and especially to every Christian congregation, not one of which, the Committee trust, for the honour of religion, will be backward or "weary of well doing," in a work so consonant to the benign spirit of Christianity, and imperatively enjoined by its precepts.

The Committee have already been greatly encouraged and highly gratified, by voluntary offers of Petitions from all the Constituents of the Dissenting Deputies assembling in London—from all the Congregations under the direction of the United Associate Synod in Scotland—and the zealous co-operation of other large and influential bodies of Christians, both in and out of the established church, in various parts of the kingdom.

It is worth knowing, that Petitions to both Houses of Parliament may be written upon *stout paper*, and need not, as is generally supposed, be engrossed on parchment; and also that they may be forwarded by post, free of expense, if addressed to a member of Parliament, left open at the ends, and indorsed with the word "Petition." When a Petition is sent up, the Committee will feel greatly obliged by a letter being also forwarded to them, stating the number of the signatures, and the name of the member to whom it is intrusted for presentation.

If in holding any Public Meeting of, or for the formation of, any Auxiliary Society, it may be thought necessary or important to obtain assistance and information from the Parent Society, the Committee will, if possible, upon timely request, depute some proper person to attend as their representative upon such occasions, and will at all times furnish such other facilities as it may be in their power to afford.

The Committee are desirous to recommend, that in order to prevent the Local Committees from falling into a state of inactivity, they should meet regularly at stated periods; and if no local business should be before them, it is hoped that the information from time to time communicated to them, will afford subjects for such interesting conversation and discussion, as will tend to diffuse information, and greatly to increase and consolidate the strength of the Society.

The Committee are further desirous of keeping up a regular correspondence with every Local Committee, and with active friends of the cause, throughout the kingdom, particularly with a view to the establishment of new Auxiliary Societies, in large towns and neighbourhoods, where none have yet been formed; *Printed Rules* for the formation of which, and of Ladies' Associations, may be had of the Secretary, upon application.

As it is evident that the proposed extension of the Society's operations, and the vast call that may be expected for printed Tracts, will occasion an expense far beyond what the Society has hitherto ventured to incur, but which, in the present posture of their affairs, they deem absolutely necessary, it is hoped that the friends of the cause will not be backward to furnish the requisite pecuniary supplies.

By the constitution of the Society, every Subscriber of One Guinea annually is a member; each Subscriber of Ten Guineas at one time, is a member for life; every Subscriber of Five Guineas annually, is a Governor; and each Subscriber of Twenty-five Guineas at one time, or who shall by one additional payment increase his original Subscription to Twenty-five Guineas, is a Governor for life.

In conclusion, the Committee call upon ALL OF EVERY CLASS, to aid this righteous cause; which they commit to God and their country, in the confident hope that He who "hateth oppression" will prosper their efforts to destroy it; and that those who repose beneath the banners of freedom, will speedily extend its blessings to our fellows, enslaved in the colonies of Great Britain.

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For 1830.

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